

Madam Chairwoman, I rise today in support of H.R. 5297, the Small Business Lending Fund Act.

It is crucial in today's world that we further expand the potential of small businesses and of key industries that have proven to create jobs and to increase our manufacturing base here in the United States.

As a former investor and financial analyst, I was particularly impressed with title III of this bill, the Small Business Early Stage Investment program. In recent years, we have seen a shift from the entrepreneur and small business start-up community, from the traditional loans and from leverage such as mortgaging our own homes, to using intellectual capital and innovation as our leverage.

As a Californian, I understand the importance of start-up businesses and the economy as California makes up a large percentage of start-ups and venture capital funders. Creating a public-private partnership designed to channel investment capital to them is increasingly important in order to get our economy on track, which is why I submitted an amendment that would include additional criteria during the selection process of these investment companies.

My amendment would ensure that, as part of the selection criteria, the small business administrator would examine the extent the investment company would concentrate its investment capital on our targeted industries. Such targeted industries have been historical in job and economic growth, such as the information technologies, life sciences, defense technologies, clean technology, and digital media.

The small business start-ups are the backbone of our economy, and they will contribute to all of the sectors so that we can get our economy going again.

[...]

As a Californian, I continue to go back every week to my district, and our small businesses are ailing. They're asking for help. They're holding on. A lot of them have not been able to make it through. Those who are still holding on are waiting for us to help them to do something.

About a month ago, I had Chairman Bernanke before us in the Joint Economic Committee. And we talked about the fact that we need--really--we need to help small business. Small business is

really where the hiring of America happens. So if they're ailing, then there will be unemployment. So I really believe in this bill. I thank those who have worked on it. I urge a ``yes" vote on the underlying bill and on this amendment.